STUDENT THESIS

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CARTHAGE-ROME-BYZANTIUM-USA

By

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SUMMARY

History is a library written on the pages of days, divided in chapters of decades and bound in volumes of centuries. It is a library of the accomplishments, mistakes and failures of mankind. It is neither classified nor restricted, yet it is too largely unknown. But even when known, the egotism of mankind too often abets the chimaeral illusion that, "It can't happen to us." So as individuals and nations we seem impelled to explore again the by-paths, the dead-ends and the "booby-traps" as though we were the first to come this way.

Our nation is today a leader among nations. Our accomplishments may be different but the position is not new. A long roster could be compiled of other nations, who, for a longer or shorter time, have also been preeminent. In their accomplishments they have added to the slow accretions of civilization. By their failures they have delayed its advancement and hastened their own declines. Today the price tag of failure is subject to tremendous inflation. At best our failure could mean the success of communism, a new barbarism with an accompanying spiritual Dark Age under its authoritarian rule. At worst it could encompass the thermo-nuclear annihilation of the race. It would appear that neither we nor humanity can afford the price of our failure.

Our study of Carthage, Rome and Byzantium gives us clear warnings of the internal weakness they fostered within themselves until it destroyed them. The most casual survey reveals evidences of that same weakness within "the body politic" and ourselves as individuals. Can we therefore be so stupid as to say again, "It can't happen to us?" If we do, that in itself will be evidence that the cancer of egocentrism has begun its deadly work.

To a great extent men live by example. If our nation is to be an exemplar to the world community, who will set the standard for the nation? It could be a tremendous challenge and opportunity to the military.

INTRODUCTION

To say that "we live in a troubled world" is considered axiomatic or even trite. Having recognized that, the fact remains that it is true; some would say, desperately true. There is on the part of many a very genuine concern over the future of our beloved nation. The prevailing optimism of the nineteenth century has by now, mid-twentieth century, been largely dissipated and replaced with a deep concern. There have been:

Three major wars,

One severe economic dislocation or depression and several minor ones,

Tremendous technical advances,

baffling and beyond the comprehension of the technologically uninitiated,

The application of these technological achievements to military weaponry creating portentious shadows of truly apocalyptic proportions,

The head-on collision of two ideologies,

each backed by the strength of our world's only two superpowers and involving the fate and future of the most of mankind, politically, economically, culturally and particularly spiritually.

The military implications of this contest, with the possibility of the use of weapons of common annihilation.

All these have raised the question, what of the future?

It would seem then, worthwhile to seek answers. If not answers, at least indications of what we can expect of our future. History, biased, incomplete, mutilated though it may be, is the record of how man has dealt with his crises from age to age and in differing circumstances. It would seem therefore that history might provide clues that would be indicative of the future and could be the basis for hope. But what clues? Time and space do not permit the analysis of every ancient ledger, the weighing of dusty armaments or trudging in the footsteps of Pharaohs and Caesars. Selectivity is essential. Nations of the past have continued their technical advances, such as they were, carried on commerce and government and increased their luxury, (standard of living by twentieth century euphism) up to the moment that their world collapsed. Belshazzer was not the first nor the last who was relaxed, replete and resplendent when the final decision of history was written large on his palace wall.[a] The condemnation of Belshazzer was that he had been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Wherein were these ancient cultures found deficient? In 500 B. C. Rome was the capital of but 350 square miles but already pointed toward greatness. Approximately 500 years later, at the death of Augustus, the proud mistress of the Mediterranean world was perceptibly moving into decline and slowly accelerating disintegration. Edward Gibbon declared it was caused by a spiritual factor introduced by Christianity and Sir J. C. Frazer agreed with him. Toynbee, a perhaps greater historian of our

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[a]Daniel 5:5.

time, agrees that it was a spiritual factor but not in the sense expressed by Gibbon and Frazer. It was not what Christianity contributed at that time but changed elements in the Roman spirit that brought on decline and disaster. Toynbee refers to, "Spiritual culture - The inward force which alone creates and sustains the outward manifestations of what is called civilization."[a] One of the concerns of this study is the determination of the changes in that "inward force," that paralyzed or destroyed its power to create or even sustain.

As we have been confronted with communism in this generation, the pressure of its assault has impelled us to examine the nature of our enemy. It is generally agreed that basically and conceptually it has spiritual roots and has the accountrements of a religious movement. This realization has lead many to re-examine our spiritual resources which may well prove the decisive factor in the struggle and in so doing verify the accuracy of Toynbee's statement quoted above. In line with that thought but harkening back to the earlier mentioned threat of technological annihilation, is the statement of General of the Armies, Douglas MacArthur, at the time of the signing of the Japanese surrender 2 September 1945,

> "We have had our last chance. If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem is basically theological and involves a spiritual recrudesence and improvement of the human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural

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[a]38, p 187.

developments of the last 2,000 years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."[a]

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the civilizations of Carthage, Rome and Byzantium for evidences of spiritual weaknesses and changes pertinent to their decline and failure. Our attention will not be devoted to the formal rites of their religion or the names of their gods. Centuries ago the Master Teacher pointed out that while spiritual values may be intangible they are evidenced by the outward expressions of living. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"[b]

Psychoanalysis of the lifestreams of long dead generations will not be attempted. However, it should prove possible to identify the fruits of those spirits even from this distance. By that is meant the recognition of their duplicities, greeds, social turbulences or items of like nature if they are so revealed as contributors to disaster.

There is one item, however, that must be kept clearly in mind in the weighing of the evidence. That is the way in which these nations came into being and lived out their lives. Of the three, only Rome went the full cycle from a small city state to an empire and then the slow disintegration of that empire. Carthage likewise began as a small city state and had reached the status of empire when her collision with Rome occurred. So it may be said that Carthage was in effect cut down while still in apparent full vigor. Byzantium made her debut in full

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[a]32, p 15.
[b]Matthew 7:16.

imperial regalia when Constantine made Constantinople his capital in 330 AD. Even the division of the state into Western and Eastern Empires did not divest Byzantium of its imperial status even though it ruled a lesser territory than formerly. The end of the Byzantium Empire came with its conquest by the Turks in 1453.

Because of these differences in "The Course of Empire" the spiritual evidences we seek may be much more apparent in one case than in another. However, the difference in degree of infection should not mislead us as to its inherent malignancy. A man infected with tuberculosis could, in fortunate circumstances, though weakened by his disease, live on for a considerable period, even of years. On the other hand, exposure to a storm in his weakened condition could bring on pneumonia with fatal results. So with these states, the apparent occasion of their destruction was different, yet it seems likely that their infection was much the same. Our search is to identify those basic malignancies.

Having identified these among the ancients we will then examine our own culture for telltale signs of similar cancers endangering the future of our nation and perhaps even of our Western Civilization. The wisdom and necessity of this was most aptly stated by Abraham Lincoln on June 16, 1858: "If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it."

In conclusion we will examine the choices of action that lie before us and that seem pertinent in the light of information uncovered.

CHAPTER 1

CARTHAGE

Section I. A Brief Synopsis of Carthaginian Greatness.

The beginnings of Carthage are surrounded in legend and myth, the best known of which is probably the account preserved in Virgil's Aeneid. The other ancient accounts of Carthaginian beginnings were written by Justin, Trogus Pompeins and Polybus. The mere naming of these is significant in that none of them were Carthaginians. This underlines the major difficulty of attempting an evaluation of Carthage. For all practical purposes, there is no one to tell us the story from the Carthaginian point of view.[a]

This lack is not only indicative of the fury and completeness of Roman destruction but probably also of their contempt for the cultural attainments of their enemies. From what information we have, all the literature and records that escaped immediate destruction in the vengeful assault on the city, were "handed over to its most illiterate and inveterate enemies,"[b] which action virtually assured their disappearance into limbo. Our information must be gleaned therefore from the writings of her enemies and for the most part are the records of the military struggle that ultimately destroyed her. These are but meager veins to mine for information of the general nature of a people.

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[a]10, p 13.
[b]10, p 38.

Carthage was established around 850 B. C. by colonists from the Phoenician city of Tyre. If legend can be trusted, Carthage had its genesis in a small band of colonists who established themselves on rented land, not far to the northwest of the present city of Tunis. Their energy and success was such that when they had reached their zenith, their territory extended from west of the Straits of Gibraltar into the area of modern Libya. On the African shore they never penetrated more than thirty or forty miles into the interior except for an area roughly corresponding to that of modern Tunisia. In addition, they controlled the southern half of Spain, the Belearic Islands, Sardinia and the western two thirds of Sicily. Their influence as traders and merchants went far beyond these borders however. They were dealers in tin from the British Isles, exotic woods from south of Sahara and spices from the orient. Their ships ventured over all the Mediterranean and north and south from Gibraltar.

From its small beginnings as a trading post, the city swelled to an estimated size of one million. Probably it could have grown even larger except for the established policy of the Carthaginians of relieving population pressure by sending out groups to establish new colonies and trading centers. As many as 30,000 would be sent out in a body on such a venture.

The city was reputed to be and probably was the wealthiest city of its time, far outstripping its proud parent in this respect, which was no small feat. Visiting Roman ambassadors have left for us amazed

and envious accounts of the luxury and ease they saw during their visits to their arch-enemy. Presumably this was a contributing factor in Rome's determination that "Carthage must be destroyed."

Section II. The Weaknesses that Contributed to Her Destruction.

Greed, inflexibility, lack of strong religious anchors and general lack of the self-discipline necessary to undertake sacrifice appear as the major weaknesses that contributed to the city's destruction. Admittedly this is a small list. These four items were interwoven into the character of these people and were in many ways mutually cumulative. In moderation some of these factors probably contributed to the earlier success of their efforts, but as with many human capabilities, what may be a virtue in moderation becomes a grievous fault in excess.

Greed, as used hereinafter, refers to an over-riding, primal avariciousness, predominant over other values. This quality has been noted by several writers both ancient and modern. "She was wrapped up in money making."[a]

This persistent preoccupation with profit and acquisitiveness showed itself in its military practices, its politics, and its statecraft. This trait was marked in the writings of Aristotle.[b] It was so important to them that they couldn't take time to go in person to defend those things that most people consider worth fighting for,

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[a]16, Vol. 2, p 6.
[b]16, p 29.

namely their nation and their homes. With rare exceptions they depended on mercenary armies to fight for them. That mercenary armies may be capable of outstanding performances when provided with outstanding leadership, was well demonstrated by Hannibal's long campaign in Italy. However, this military practice, as a whole, gave them considerable difficulty, traceable quite directly to greed. "No nation can build a permanent structure, unless the individuals who govern are and remain themselves the defenders of the country."[a]

Those exceptions, referred to above, occurred relatively early in their history. Even then, as would be expected in consonance with their national characteristics, they did not participate in long arduous campaigns but rather accompanied the mercenaries when it seemed that there was little doubt of the outcome of the battle. The Carthaginians then going to war were known as "the Sacred Band" and made a striking show in their magnificent armor and white shields, dressed in the finest raiment, carrying with them mess equipment of silver and gold.[b] Surely a striking contrast with their naked Numidian cavalry and other mercenary troops. Going out thus, 10,000 Carthaginians perished in the Battle of Criminesus. That this was the average Carthaginian's attitude toward giving his time and talents to military service seems to be well established by T. A. Dodge.[c]

Since the Carthaginians made the decisions in this case it is

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[a]16, p 17.
[b]36, p 58.
[c]16, p 12.

safe to assume that they were the ones who decided that their time and services were too valuable to be squandered in military service.

This greed very nearly capped defeat with disaster following their unsuccessful war in Sicily with Rome (254-241 B. C.) At the conclusion of that war the mercenary troops were evacuated to Carthage, to be paid and dismissed. Many of them had been fighting for years without pay, relying on the word of the very able Hamilcar that their pay would be forthcoming. Defeat had not improved their patience and Hamilcar arranged that they should be shipped out in small increments, thus permitting the home government to pay them and be rid of them before the next contingent arrived. However, those in power at home missed the significance of this strategy entirely, probably blinded by what they conceived to be a brilliant scheme to save some money. They allowed the incoming increments of troops to accumulate and then tried to induce them to accept less than was their due. The result is known to history as the Revolt of the Carthaginian Mercenaries.[ab] Three years of war ensued that very nearly ended Carthage then and there. Not until Hamilcar himself was set against his erst-while troops was Carthage able to put down this uprising. Thus, greed cost Carthage far more in treasure, to say nothing of the blood shed, than the relatively paltry sum at issue which set off the whole explosion.

It is interesting to speculate on Rome's strict neutrality in this

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[a]4, p 85.
[b]2, p 59.

struggle. In view of her much advertised determination to destroy Carthage, it would seem that her objective could easily have been achieved at this time. We can only note that Carthage's cupidity offered Rome a golden opportunity that she missed.

The dominance of greed over statesmanship was further demonstrated by the Carthaginian rulers in connection with Hannibal's campaign in Italy. It should have been evident after the First Punic War that Rome must at least be neutralized if not destroyed if Carthage was to survive. Yet it was necessary for Hannibal to employ subterfuge to get even their grudging approval of his venture in Italy. They gave him but little more than that. During the entire fifteen years he was in Italy, Carthage's major preoccupation was with Spain and with attempting to ensure the uninterrupted flow of revenues from the mines, not for reinforcements and aid to Hannibal, but for use in almost any other way,[a] preferably in what was their own short term interest.

The primary reason why they could not thus understand was that their entire thinking had become commerce-motive dominated. Investment and defense in Spain? Yes, of course, because there were substantial and visible dividends coming in from Spain. Investment in Hannibal's venture? What were the dividends? Neither visible nor apparent to them. Therefore, not understanding the great stakes involved, because of their mercenary myopia, they refused the support he needed and that could well have ensured their own survival.

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[a]16, pp 564-565.

Inflexibility of mind: Toynbee has a thesis that such inflexibility is usually based on past successes which have become the enemy of further success in that a people having developed a successful technique or process that works eminently well, too often "rest on their oars", their complacency stifling creativity. In the meantime, others, by continuing to exercise their ingenuity and creativity, surpass and overcome them, thus bringing about their downfall.[a]

That this was the case with Carthage seems beyond question. A successful commercial system had been developed, but the intensification of the excessive devotion to that system was contributory to disaster. Baker noted how this inflexibility was evident throughout all their affairs. "They had a habit of travelling mentally in a straight line, unless compelled by impressive forces to change that state; and even then they were apt to return to their course....Their commanders made sacrosanct the methods they employed,..."[b]

This inflexibility was evident in the form and operation of the government. This is brought out very clearly by Church.[c]

It is unquestionably true that the governmental system of Carthage was exceptionally stable and it used the same forms and process for centuries.[d]

It is not surprising that such a successful governmental organization

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[a]38, pp 333 and 349.
[b]2, pp 47-49.
[c]10, p 104.
[d]17, p 681.

should fall into the very trap that Toynbee describes. A review of the previous pages indicates a consistent inflexibility in;

Their persistent reliance on mercenary troops,

Their continuously putting commercial advantage and gain ahead of statesmanship,

Their treatment of Hannibal.

In connection with Hannibal, a demonstration of inflexibility as entertained by an individual, was the unwavering opposition of the Carthaginian leader Hanno to Hannibal and before that to his father, Hamilcar. The inflexibility of the governing clique was well as the constant enmity of Hanno are both well illustrated in Smith's accounts of the Revolt of the Mercenaries.[a]

This instance of Hanno's opposition to Hamilcar would not be significant by itself, but Hanno apparently was at least partially responsible for the failure of the Sicilian War against Rome in that he was even then one of the important voices, if not the leader, of the Peace Party. Hanno's group contributed to Hamilcar's defeat through passive resistance to all attempts to reinforce Hamilcar's troops. When it was not possible to refuse all assistance, it was made minimal. Since Hanno and his party held power at that time, to them can be attributed the long period that Hamilcar's troops fought without pay, the basic cause of the mercenaries' revolt. In view of

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[a]36, pp 155-156.

the tight-fisted nature of Hanno's party, one cannot escape the thought that a possible motivation for the long delay in making these payments was the idea that the longer the fighting continued the fewer veterans would remain to claim their pay. Of that one can only conjecture.

The long continuing hostility of Hanno toward the House of Barca appears again and again and apparently was notorious enough that it was known even to the Romans. Livy gives it dramatic emphasis in his account of Hannibal's final recall from Italy.[a]

Thus the hostility of Hanno was demonstrably inflexible against the father and then the son until he accomplished his purpose.

That the House of Barca also had its share of persistence is shown by the story, generally accepted as true, that Hamilcar required of Hannibal an oath of eternal enmity to Rome and this when Hannibal himself was not yet in his teens. It is further underlined by Hannibal's persistence in his campaign against Rome for fifteen years, continuing long after it must have been amply demonstrated to him that adequate assistance was not coming and his cause was therefore hopeless. On the other hand we must give him credit for not allowing an inflexibility of mind dictate his strategy and tactics as an earlier quotation indicates was true of other Carthaginian generals.

> "The Carthaginians religion originally was essentially that of their Phoenician ancestors. They worshipped Astarte, Baal, Melkarth, Moloch, Tanith, and other divinities and

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[a]10, p 259.

> propitiated them with lascivious rites, and in some cases, human sacrifice. Their commercial intercourse later made the Carthaginians hospitable to foreign, chiefly Greek, divinities."[a]

At first it would seem that here is a decided contrast to the inflexibility noted earlier, especially when contrasted to the determinedly monotheistic Jews who had, for centuries, been the neighbors of Tyre, the parent city. Yet this does after all fit in to what we have noted earlier. These native gods, however useful they might seem in an emergency, were not of preeminent importance in the lives of the Carthaginians, and could be and were made secondary to their commercial interests. It was their commercial interests that made them hospitable to foreign gods. If more deities would further their commercial enterprises then let the old gods move over and make room for new. Nothing must be overlooked that would aid commerce. In other ancient cultures where foreign gods and temples appeared in seaport cities the addition was made by foreign colonies of seamen or merchants who brought their own deities with them and thus religious infiltration was accomplished. The Carthaginians kept an ironclad monopoly on their trade and the use of the ports under their control except in emergencies and then only long enough to secure necessary supplies or make emergency repairs. This is specifically spelled out in Carthage's treaties with Rome when Carthage had the power to enforce its will, so the new gods appeared in Carthage only because the

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[a]17, p 681.

Carthaginians brought them in hoping they might be of some help in their commercial enterprises.

Their lack of exclusive attachment to their native gods and willingness to turn to whatever deity that at the moment seemed to be the one to do them the most good, is illustrated by Church in his account of their use of Greek rites to propitiate ill-fortune.[a]

Such a growing pantheon was not at all unusual in the pagan world of a later date. However, these additions were brought by outsiders to the community. Judaism was brought to Rome by Jews themselves who established an enclave in the imperial city. The gods of Greece were brought to Rome by the multitudes of Greek slaves. There is little evidence of the worship of Persian Mithra until slaves and mercenary soldiers from that far away land brought their god with them, but one cannot escape a very strong suspicion that the Carthaginian brought additional gods back to Carthage for much the same reason he brought tin from Britain and papyrus from Egypt, because he thought that it might well be profitable to do so.

We find no evidence of the type of religious devotion that moved the inhabitants of Jersualem to riots when the conquering Romans attempted to enter the Holy City carrying their standards exhibiting the imperial eagle of Rome, thus violating the commandment against graven images. The "practical" Carthaginian had nothing in common with the Christian

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[a]10, p 60.

who would let himself be cast to the lions in the Colosseum rather than make even token acknowledgement of the divinity of Caesar.

If Carthage practiced human sacrifice in its religious rites,[a] but as in the case of military service, so here, Carthaginians were prepared to sacrifice to the last drop of blood, some one else's blood. Again, as in the case of military service, there were some exceptions, as shown by Smith in the accounts of their rites.

While it is felt that there is significance in this practice it is difficult to evaluate in view of the fragmentary information available and the limitations of this study. Human sacrifice has been wide spread among many peoples of primitive religious cultures. The Aztecs in far off America practiced it. The great prophets of Israel spoke against the practice[b]. The sacrifice of sons and daughters, or virgins were generally considered the most acceptable, but prisoners of war were more frequently used in greater numbers.

Human life was not held in any great reverence, so if there was anything to be attained by the sacrifice of some one else's life, there was little compunction about it. Tragic as was the practice of slavery, it was usually the only alternative to death that the conquered could expect across many a dreary century. That this was also true of the Carthaginians, is shown in Church's account of their sacrifice of 30,000 of the citizens of Himera in Sicily, circa 400 B. C.[c]

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[a]36, pp 109-110.
[b]Deuteronomy 18:10, Jeremiah 32:35, Ezekiel 16:21.
[c]10, p 35.

Our examples of Carthaginian religious practices have come out of a military milieu. Could we but have another type of witness, possibly we could soften our judgment of the religious life of this people, but we are forced to rely upon the records of military encounters and the fleeting, prejudiced observations of Roman emmissaries, whose primary mission dealt with decisions of military import rather than of sociological inquiry.

The lack of the self-discipline required for necessary sacrifices that we here impute to the Carthaginians cannot be "nailed down" by quoting authors either ancient or modern. However, as was noted at the beginning, the strands that we are examining are inextricably interwoven and an examination of two or three instances earlier cited should be sufficient to uncover this strand with which we are now concerned.

First, we have noted their persistent use of mercenary troops in practically all of their military activities. Even during the three desperate years of the War of the Revolt of the Mercenaries, the brunt of the fighting was borne, not by the Carthaginians whose homes and very lives were at stake, but by other mercenaries. Presumably, even then the average Carthaginian felt his time was too valuable to spend in military service. That war itself was brought on by their unwillingness to accept the austerity or even sacrifice that would have been entailed in the paying in full the claims of the Sicilian Veterans. True, they were under the yoke of heavy indemnities to Rome, yet there

is little question that the debt to the mercenaries could have been paid in full with no more than a little austerity since the amount spent in quelling the revolt considerably exceeded that which Hanno and his party attempted to save.

Finally, their treatment of Hannibal, during his Italian campaign: If we may for a moment disregard the personal animosities entangled in that situation, their reluctance to reduce their support to Spain and thus take what seemed a chance of losing that province and its enormous revenues, is perhaps understandable. Those revenues of themselves, provided the means of Spain's defense, but there is no evidence of any willingness to share those revenues outside Carthage in order that Rome, Carthage's ultimate enemy, might be neutralized or destroyed. There appears to be no indication that the average Carthaginian, or Carthage as a whole, exhibited any willingness to undergo any sacrifice for the good of the whole when it could be avoided. Perhaps we should say hardship or misfortune rather than sacrifice, for the latter word carries with it connotations of a voluntary act. Of this we find no trace, if we may except the Barca family and possibly a few others whose names are lost to history.

Section III. Summation on Carthage.

Carthage was destroyed outright while at or near the zenith of its power and accomplishment. We can make numerous conjectures as to the course of civilization had history been reversed and Rome rather

than Carthage, was destroyed, or if the two centers of power had managed to co-exist, but our interest lies in ascertaining, if possible, those characteristics that made possible, or at least contributed to her destruction. As near as could be determined from our study there were:

Greed, amounting to an obsession, thus becoming a barrier to intelligent statecraft.

Inflexibility, not only in the greedy pursuit of commercial gain, but in internal feuds and governmental process, that made adjustment to new perils and new situations impossible or at least inadequate to insure survival.

Lack of strong religious beliefs and practices that could have mitigated these other all too human failings. The religion of Carthage was more an instrument of commercial cupidity and an after thought in extremities, than an essential part of their manner of life.

All of these emphasize a strong self-centeredness, possibly growing out of over-confidence based on past successes and an egotistical short-sightedness that could admit of no action not obviously self-advantageous.

In his monumental historical studies Arnold Toynbee developed a theory concerning what he calls "The Stimulus of Blows." Briefly, this theory is that a society that has borne the brunt of a heavy blow or blows will be stimulated to new and greater efforts, thus achieving even greater heights of accomplishment than prior to the blow.

> "The defeat of Carthage in the First Punic War stimulated Hamilcar Barca to conquer for his country an empire in Spain which surpassed the empire she had just lost in Sicily. Even after the defeat of Hannibal in the Second Punic War the Carthaginians twice astonished the world in the half century that elapsed before their final destruction, first by the rapidity with which they paid of their war indemnity, and secondly, by the heroism with which their whole population, men, women and children, fought and died in the final struggle."[a]

Toynbee's theory is in no wise challenged by this paper. The statements he makes are accurate, but it is our contention that the faults that have been enumerated in this study were the shackles that exercised a fatal restraint on the admittedly tremendous effort that Carthage made in response to the series of blows Rome delivered. In a struggle for survival, almost is not good enough.

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[a] 38, p 109.

CHAPTER 2

ROME

Section I. A Brief Synopsis of Roman Greatness.

The history of Rome should be relatively familiar ground for everyone, therefore only the briefest of rundowns should be necessary; not to establish Rome's greatness, that is beyond quibble, but simply to renew the image of the great institution that was Rome. Rome did not emerge on the stage of history, even on the local Italian scene, as a sovereign entity until it had thrown off the rule of the Etruscan kings circa 486 B. C. At that time Rome exercised sovereignty over little more than the area of the little city itself and the greater portion of the Latium Plain. By 265 B. C., a period of little more than two hundred years, through conquests and alliances they had secured their hold on all the Italian boot south of Liguria and the Po Valley. This had come about in a piecemeal fashion and was not the result of predetermined national policy but largely in response to what she considered threats to herself or to her allies. This unification under Rome did not constitute in any sense a unified state but rather was a grab-bag of individual entities under Roman rule.[a]

Up to this time Rome retained and strengthened her republican institutions of government, and in general her original latin characteristics. There is considerable evidence of stresses and strains to her structure by this expansion.

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[a] 4, p 55.

The next two hundred and twenty one years, from 265 B. C. to 44 B. C., saw an ever-accelerated expansion that culminated in the end of a republic that had ruled an empire extending from Cappadocia in Asia Minor to what is modern Portugal on the west, and from the coast of Normandy on the North to the Numidian fringe of the Sahara. The problems accompanying such an empire were too great for a governmental structure originally designed to rule a city-state and its not too extensive environs. The Republic had long since ceased to be a system of popular government. Its organization no longer expressed the voice or the opinion of even the Roman citizens, but was in the control of a small number of Roman nobles and capitalists who ran it for their own profit. Reforms had been attempted and failed.

Under the Caesars, the Empire grew still more until it extended from Scotland on the northwest to the falls of the Nile in the southeast, from the Caspian Sea to the Atlantic. All the lands and peoples circling the Mediterranean were under Roman rule, and enjoyed a Pax Romana of an extent and duration that they had never known before or since. After approximately two hundred years there began, in 235 AD, a period of protracted civil wars that was to last for fifty years and resulted in the dissolution of the Empire. In 285 Diocletian succeeded in reestablishing order and the processes of government and was also, in due time, able to restore the former frontiers. From this time the emperor, supported by the army and the bureaucracy, was the sole authority of the state, without even token acknowledgment of the will of the people.

In 330 Constantine the Great established Constantinople as the new capital of the Empire and Rome was only the sub-capital. Actually this was the beginning of the division of the old empire into two parts that gradually became more distinct. The Western Empire was going into decline at a rapidly accelerated pace. The conquest of Italy by the Ostrogothes 488-493 may be considered the final end of the political entity that had broken the yoke of the Etruscan kings a thousand years before. It was a long road, with many twists and turns and the organism that died in 493 bore little resemblance to that which had begun the journey a thousand years before.

Section II. The Weaknesses That Brought on the Decline and Disintegration of Rome.

This evaluation has been attempted by experts over the years and the results have been primarily notable for their diversity. Not only do these historians disagree as to the causes, they also disagree as to the timing of the evidences of decline.

> "In his opening chapter Gibbon described the Empire under the Antonines as enjoying 'a happy period of more than fourscore years' of peace and prosperity; and yet nothing is more certain than that this halcyon age was in reality an interval of agricultural ruin. On this point Pliny was explicit, and Pliny was a large land owner."[a]

In contrast, Adams saw the beginnings of disasterous symptoms in the Antonine age; Gibbon pointed to the much later time when Christianity began to make its presence unmistakably known; Toynbee believes

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[a]1, p 84.

that the whole system had started the process of its inevitable destruction even before the time of the Empire.[a]

Solid moral strength and virtues were the foundations on which the Romans began their tremendous structure of government and built it into an empire. Some of their specific practices perhaps we cannot admire, but the purposes and values were sound, pagans though they were. By way of contrast with later developments a brief resume of their early beliefs and practices should prove helpful.

The family was a solid unit, unquestionably authoritarian, but built upon mutual respect and obligation of all concerned.[b]

The sense of obligation felt by the Roman citizen in the early days of the republic cannot be better described than as follows:

> "The discipline and respect for authority which was acquired in the family life was carried with him by the Roman into his public relations, and this sense of duty was perhaps the strongest quality in the Roman Character. It was supplemented by the characteristic Roman seriousness (GRAVITAS) developed under the stress of the long struggles for existence waged by the early Roman state. For the Romans the highest virtue was piety (PIETA) which meant the dutiful performance of all one's obligations, to the gods, to one's kinsmen, and to the state. And it was toward the state in particular that a Roman was expected to exhibit loyalty and devotion. Friends, relatives, life itself, must all be sacrificed for the good of the state. The lives of the statesmen and generals of the early republic furnished a series of examples of patriotism in its various aspects which were regarded as worthy of imitation by succeeding generations."[c]

An outstanding example of their willingness to sacrifice for the good of the state occurred during the First Punic War.

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[a]38, p 261.
[b]4, p 75.
[c]4, pp 76-77.

"Year after year the struggle dragged on, while Hamilcar Barca, the Carthaginian commander, was plundering the coasts of Italy with his fleet. The treasury at Rome was empty and the Romans were at the end of their resources; but by private contribution they succeeded in building another fleet which put to sea in 242 B. C. with two hundred battleships of five banks of oars. The Carthaginian fleet was defeated and broken up (241 B. C.) and as a result the Carthaginians found themselves unable to send re-enforcements across the sea to their army in Sicily."[a]

This gives us a picture of a self disciplined people, whose activities were regulated by respect for their fellowmen, and their rights; a respect that extended horizontally to his equals, and vertically up to those with authority over him and down to those who were his responsibility. This was the necessary material for a cohesive, operational, responsible state.

Moral disintegration in all these areas is in the broadest sense the great weakness that brought on the Roman decline and disintegration. The decay and disappearance of the virtues cited above was for the most part well advanced by the end of the republic and the cancer continued to grow. In our discussion it will not be possible to stick closely to a chronological time frame or to keep the various elements strictly segregated. In a governmental, social and cultural complex of the extent and duration of that of Rome, all these elements are almost inextricably entwined.

Roman family life was one of the earlier and more significant casualties in deterioration of Roman Character. Breasted indicates that this was one of the key elements of Roman decadence.

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[a]6, p 534.

> "The old simplicity, purity and beauty of the Roman family was disappearing and divorce was becoming common. The greatest days of Roman character were past and Roman power was to go on growing without the restraining influence of old Roman virtues."[a]

This trend was evident even in the days of the republic when it was referred to in scathing terms by the moralists and satirists of the time,[b] but the process was deeply aggravated by the excesses of the Civil Wars.[c] In all classes there was a widespread disinclination to marry, and a tremendous increase in the number of illegitimate births. Augustus tried to remedy the situation by the passage of the Julian Law and Papia Poppaean penalizing the unmarried and setting up a system of rewards for procreating children.[d] However, at the very time Augustus was making every effort to change the situation the husband of his daughter Julia left her because of her flagrant unfaithfulness. She was banished to Pandantaria and her "playmates" also punished, some by banishment and others by death. Significantly her daughter, also named Julia, and of course the granddaughter of Augustus, somewhat later met the same fate for the same offenses.[e] The laws of Augustus could not effect a change in moral climate. Divorce was easy. The necessity for prompt remarriage required by his laws actually seemed to act as a stimulus to immorality by legalizing a certain looseness of life. Senca claimed that there were numerous women who reckoned years

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[a]6, pp 263-264.
[b]15, p 63.
[c]21, p 213.
[d]34, p 47.
[e]21, p 42.

not by the changes in the consulships but by their husbands. Juvenal the Satarist lampoons one woman as having had eight husbands in five years. Despite the ease of divorce and remarriage, the number of illegitimate births continued to grow.[a]

> "Suetoius says, that when Vespatian came to the throne, lexity exceeded all bonds owing to the lenient administration of the law: The Emperor proposed in the Senate a law, making ladies who had relations with their slaves, themselves slaves. Marcus Aurelius was obligated to regulate the indulgence of the women and the noble youths: Cassius Dio discovered that Severus' laws against adultry (passed in his consulship) provoked 3,000 cases, and this only among the consulars and senators in the consular-senate court."[b]

Obviously those whose names were marked by history, or those who drew the attention of the satirists and other writers were primarily those in prominence. However, there seems little doubt that the idle multitudes in Rome assiduously aped the morals as well as the manners of their "betters". The gradual erosion and disappearance of a stable middle class and independent peasantry also contributed to the breakdown of stable family relationships.

Public life in general increasingly displayed the growing disregard for principle and the lack of sense of responsibility and obligation that already has been observed in the field of family relations. The rapacity displayed by the rulers of the conquered areas, the corruption of the financial system, the cupidity of the upper classes leading to the destruction of the middle classes, the callous pursuit of luxury and the

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[a]15, p 57.
[b]21, p 242.

greed for wealth, all were the antithesis of the characteristics that started Rome on her road to greatness.

The venality of public officials appeared during the republic and in part was due to social conditions and the old city-state governmental procedures that were inadequate for the careful control of outlying territories. The accumulating masses in Rome held the power to vote. No politician or would-be-leader could hope to gain an office without their favor. This was purchased through gladitorial contests, chariot races, free grain, etc. Consequently by the time they were elected most office holders were deeply in debt, the terms of office were short so consequently the urge to make the most of every opportunity for gain were seldom resisted.[a]

> "Irresponsible senatorial governors and knights who held contracts for the collection of provincial taxes cooperated to fleece the helpless provinces. Both the aristocratic senatorial party and the democratic party lead by the knights were rapidly adopting a policy of barefaced imperialism, motivated by no more altruistic aim than to rob the conquered peoples of the East."[b]

This was a sad contrast with the earlier policy of making conquered provinces "junior partners" with many of the privileges of citizenship. Veres' term as governor of Sicily is not an unusual example of such practice. The confiscation of property for his own profit; the selling of "justice" to the highest bidder; the sale of municipal offices and priesthoods; the loan of public money at usurious rates for his own

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[a]6, pp 554-556.
[b]19, p 73.

benefit; the forced collection of grain that he sold to the Roman government at normal market price; all constitute but a partial list of the ways his used his office to build a personal fortune.[a]

The Senate [illegible] indifferent to these abuses probably due to their own interest in either being next or because they had already taken their turn.

The Numidian Jurgatha proved that Roman senators, generals, consuls and tribuns could be bought without difficulty if one had the price.[b] Financial morality seemed to be an unknown quality among the leaders of Rome. Brutus made a loan to the Senate of Salamina at an interest rate of 48% a year. His illegal contracts were protected by decrees from the compliant Roman Senate and he borrowed troops from the Roman governor to enforce payment.[c] The revolt of Boadicea in Britain was the result of Roman financial manipulations on that island. It cost the Romans 70,000 lives, but Seneca made a profit.[d]

Many similar specific examples could be given. The major premise of the first chapter of Brooks Adams' "The Law of Civilization and Decay," is that this almost incredible avarice coupled with financial chicanery was the chief architect of Roman disaster. He gives "chapter and verse" to document his contention.

It would be hard to find a better brief summation of the results of this cupidity than that given by Ferguson and Brown,

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[a] 4, p 148.
[b] 4, p 147.
[c] 1, p 89.
[d] 1, p 89.

"Rome had now become a parasitical state, draining the provinces of their wealth with disasterous results to herself as well as the unfortunate provincials. The great fortunes made by the conquering generals, senatorial governors and tax collecting knights went to increase the size and number of large estates in Italy. And this in turn swelled the number of small farmers who, having lost their land, were forced to join the degraded city populace that lived on the dole from the provincial revenues. The final result of imperialism seemed to be the ruin of the provinces and the demoralization of the Roman citizens of every class."[a]

There were, of course, here and there conspicuous exceptions to the indictment above, but not in sufficient numbers to mitigate the situation to any degree and served only as points of contrast to the whole dark situation. All the evidences indicate that Juvenal had accurately evaluated his society when, in one of his satires, he wrote:

"O Gold, Though Rome beholds no altar flame,
No temples rise to thy pernicious name,
Such as to Victory, Virtue, Faith are reared,
And Concord, where the clamorous stork is heard,
Yet if thy full divinity confessed,
Thy shrine established here in every breast!"[b]

Slavery was another of the festering sores in the body of the Empire. Slavery was not unique to ancient times, however the development of slavery in the latter part of the republic and the Empire was especially malignant. Its evils were augmented by the greed we have already examined. Slaves came from three sources: prisoners of war, children sold into slavery in times of famine, and people sold into slavery for their debts. The first and third supplied by far the greatest number. Slavery made its first appearance in Rome at the time

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[a]19, p 73.
[b]34, p 131.

of the first Punic War. Evidently the Romans did not make slaves of their fellow Italians with whom they had fought earlier. Following the Punic Wars slavery became a profitable sideline of waging war and the Romans, eager for every opportunity to enhance their wealth, were not slow to see this profitable angle. "The later campaigns on the Rhine and the Danube were really slave hunts on a gigantic scale. Probus brought back sixteen thousand men from Germany, 'The bravest and most robust of their youth'."[a]

The creation of large estates enabled the Romans to go into large scale production and do well on a small margin of profit. The large acreages were worked by slave labor, (free labor was too expensive and cut down the profit). They even went one step farther in their inhumanity; "Having all Asia Minor to draw on for labor (slaves) they deliberately starved and overworked their field hands, since it was cheaper to buy others than to lose command of the market."[b]

At about seventy cents a head, it was cheaper to simply work them into an early grave, and then replace them, than to give them decent care, an inhuman, cold-blooded disregard of human values, motivated by but one consideration, the greatest possible accumulation of wealth by any means regardless of its brutality.

The brutalizing effect of the commercialization of slavery was not the only evil dividend that slavery brought to Rome. The Greeks

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[a] 1, p 90.
[b] 1, p 74.

had a saying that "The day of enslavement deprives a man of half his manhood,"[a] and the Romans exposed every phase of their life to those whom they had themselves debased. Slaves were teachers of Roman children History has record of some who served their masters well; there were many more who taught their young charges moral corruption.

> "The system of domestic slavery was the most fruitful of corruption. In the days of Salvianus, as in the days of Horace, the attractive slave girl too often was the prey of her master's lusts; and amours of this kind were regarded even in Christian families with a tolerance which astonished modern sentiment. Perhaps even more insidious was the influence of female slaves on their young mistresses."[b]

There is more, but the major delineations of this canker have been established. There remains only one additional sidelight. Because of their very numbers the Freedmen began to assume considerable significance in Roman society. These were ex-slaves or the descendants of such. Many of them became important servants of the Emperors. The following quotation sums them up quicker perhaps than could be done otherwise:

> "Pliny once made the following profound observation about the Caesars: 'They are masters of the citizens and the slaves of the freedmen.' What motives led the emperors to depend so largely upon the services of the freedmen? They desired to impress the masses, whose temper it was important not to irritate, with the idea that the imperial court was not essentially different from a private family. Furthermore they were influenced by a political consideration which, though diametrically opposed to this affectation of simplicity, is not inconsistent with it. They tried, by employing

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[a] 38, p 127.
[b] 15, p 128.

freedmen in places of honor, to show plainly how little importance they attached to differences in social rank; they wished to make it understood that they had adopted a system of leveling and thus break down the resistance of the ancient patrician class, and to teach all that the imperial pleasure was the source of every honor."[a]

Whatever may have been the perhaps over-shrewd motivations of the emperors, the end result was one more fissure among a badly divided people.

"They swelled the ranks of legacy hunters, false witnesses and brokers. Shrewd, active, unscrupulous knights of industry, convinced that business meant other people's money, they often quickly amassed a fortune. And then they exhibited those vices that in all ages have come with sudden elevation of fortune."[b]

The "old time religion" of Rome was another casualty of expansionism and sophistication. As it declined and faded so too did the strong sense of unity, of family and state, that it had engendered, fade from the scene. The equally strong sense of duty, cardinal virtue of the old Romans likewise went into eclipse. Cynical political manipulation of the priesthood and the official faith beginning in the time of Graachii, around 133 B. C. and secular methods of elections to the priesthood caused the educated to hold religion in contempt. The masses became disillusioned and lost their confidence in the priests and the faith they represented.[c]

The Romans appropriated the literary heritage of Greek mythology simply by identifying the native Roman gods with their Greek counterparts.

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[a]34, p 58.
[b]34, pp 106-107.
[c]4, p 77.

This greatly enriched Roman literature but left the resultant panthenon with no indigenous roots. By the Age of Augustus the educated considered it primarily a literary convention, a "poet's" religion, and the uneducated masses were turning to cults imported from the east.[a]

Augustus, Maximinus Daia and Julian each tried to restore the old modes of worship[b] but the damage had been done, religion like morality, cannot be legislated. Public and private morals lacking any real sanction continued to decline.

Disregard for the law when it involves the slaughter of fellow citizens for the advancement of one's personal ambitions and objectives involves more than the absence of regard for unity and duty as cherished by the earlier Romans. It is an egotistical self-centeredness which no social structure can long survive. This lawlessness became frequent in the later days of the Republic leading to the civil war that ended the republic. Three tribunes were murdered in a period of forty years.

132 B. C. Tiberious Gracchus

121 B. C. Gaius Gracchus

91 B. C. Drusus

This was the sowing of dragons' teeth and the bloody harvest was not long in coming.

> "In 88 B. C. Sulla...marched on Rome and drove out Marius and the democratic leaders. It was an armed Coup d' etat. Sulla then left to carry on a war with the eastern King Methridates of Pontus, while Marius returned with an army, seized the capital and massacred hundreds of his senatorial

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[a]19, p 77.
[b]38, pp 55-56.

> enemies. During the next few years the violence of party strife grew into civil war, accompanied by whosesale proscriptions and massacres of the defeated parties. Sulla returned in 84 B. C. and after heavy fighting once more occupied Rome and proscribed thousands of knights and senators of the democratic party. It has been reckoned that during the decade of the Social War and the early Civil Wars at least half a million Romans and Italians perished."[a]

No Roman thereafter could with confidence "bet his life" on the sanctuary of law. The rulers themselves were not immune from the threat of sudden and extra-legal homicide, still less so were their subjects.

Toynbee doesn't specifically say but it is undoubtedly this phase of Roman history that he had in mind when he said that the Empire was already doomed by the time it came into existence by events that had transpired under the republic.[b]

The disappearance of the military spirit from among the Romans marked a distinct change. For centuries the Roman legionnaire and his officers were considered a unique and outstanding combination of what can perhaps best be called the citizen-soldier. Rome's success in the expansion of her borders during the Republic was evidence of their effectiveness. It would be too much to expect that the tide of corruption, greed and self-seeking would not also have its effect upon the army. Sulla, Brutus, Seneca, and many, many others used the army for the furtherance of purely personal ambitions. With these examples

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[a]19, p 73.
[b]38, p 365.

before them, Romans began to avoid military service. Why should they risk their lives on the battlefield and undergo the hardships of the field when there was free bread and circuses in Rome??[a]

> "Towards the end of the fourth century the practice of self mutilation to escape service had become so common that it had to be checked by the most cruel punishments. In the years between 396 and 412, Honorius issued nine edicts on desertion and the concealment of deserters."[b]

Consequently Rome began increasingly to recruit her armies from beyond her borders, recruiting the barbarians first individually, then in groups, finally by tribes and nations. She had no choice.

> "Rome not only failed to breed the common soldier, she also failed to produce generals. After the first century, the change was marked. Trajan was a Spaniard, Septimus Severus an African, Aurelian an Illyrian peasant, Diocletian a Dalmatian slave, Constantius Chlorus a Dardanian noble, and the son of Constantius, by a Dacian woman, was the great Constantine."[c]

When Diocletian was attempting to maintain the sagging borders of his empire, the number of mercenaries in his armies was twice that of Romans used at any one time by the expanding Republic. An interesting commentary on the fighting qualities of the mercenaries as compared with the citizen-soldiers of the Republic. When citizens no longer feel it an obligation and a duty, if not an honor to defend their homeland the loyalty and discipline required for the job cannot be purchased for gold. If Rome learned this lesson, and there is no evidence she did, she learned it too late.

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[a] 6, p 670.
[b] 15, p 236.
[c] 1, p 91.

Section III. Summation on Rome.

The Roman rise to ascendance and subsequent decline covered many centuries. Their contributions to civilization were incalculable. In the beginning they were a people of solid if somewhat austere virtues. Discipline, respect for authority, sense of obligation and duty to the point of sacrifice, loyalty to family, friends and above all to the state are characteristics that made them great.

With success, growing power and wealth these characteristics gradually disappeared and Rome lost her brakes. As the old virtues declined and were replaced by less worthy qualities the process accelerated in spite of strenuous efforts at times to halt the process. The new qualities that replaced the old can be summed up essentially in two words, greed and selfishness.

Greed for wealth; plundered the provinces,
disposessed the landowning peasants,
trafficked in slavery,
rigged the financial and tax structure.

Selfishness; (a close kin to greed)
sacrificed family life and morality,
sought self-satisfaction in sensualism,
refused to meet a citizen's obligations,
placed self above the law.

However categorized we cannot escape the fact that an overwhelming self-centeredness on the part of everyone, exercised too often to the

fullest extent permitted by their position of power or opportunity lay at the root of most of Rome's troubles.

The results were ultimately catastrophic. Greed and selfishness knows no desire to share. The masses were plundered and those with wealth grew richer and fewer as they preyed on each other. The masses gave up hope and grew apathetic.[a] Men of ability who at an earlier age would have moved to positions of leadership in cities and provinces, saw no future in the system of government, no possibility of a share in the control of public affairs. "Responsible citizenship, which does so much to develop the best among the citizens of any community and which had earlier so sadly declined in Greece, was now passing away, never to reappear in the ancient world."[b]

Thus sounds the knell of the Romans.

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[a]19, p 164.
[b]6, p 670.

CHAPTER 3

BYZANTIUM

Section I. A Brief Synopsis of Byzantine Greatness.

For many reasons the history of Byzantium is not so well known to us as that of Rome. There is not even agreement among scholars as to what constitutes the life span of the empire.[a]

For the purpose of this study 500 A.D. is a logical place to begin and either 1204 or 1453 will do for the finish since the characteristics for which we search were well established by 1204 and there seems to have been no significant change or attempt at reform subsequent to that date.

After 500 Justinian, who was the first ruler of significance, attempted to restore the rule of Byzantium over the territory that had been the western Empire. He regained Africa, Italy, Corsica, Sardinia, the Belearic Islands and part of Spain. The effort bankrupt his treasury and the reconquered territories were soon lost. Exhausted militarily and financially, torn with political anarchy aggravated by religious quarrels, the next hundred years and more was a time of deadly danger to the Empire. By the end of the period the imperial territory was reduced to Asia Minor, The Balkan Peninsula and the Exarchate of Ravenna in Italy.[b]

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[a]14, p 45.
[b]13, p 9.

This period, as was the entire life span of Byzantium was a time of extensive and massive population movements and migrations that again and again put heavy pressure on the borders of the nation, and nibbled away its provinces.

In the eighth century the government was reorganized on even more authoritarian lines, Roman traditions and customs discarded and it became thoroughly Greek. The Christian church entered more actively into the political processes.

Under the Isaurian Dynasty 717-867 Byzantium enjoyed strong leadership. By 867, so well had these rulers done their work that they had set the stage for a "golden age" of one hundred and fifty years. The maintenance of this halcyon period was due to the strength, energy and statesmanship of the Macedonian Dynasty that followed. These rulers had many faults but they were brilliant military leaders and able administrators who saw that their own destiny was tied with the welfare of their country. The boundaries of the nation were pushed out again until they stretched from Syria to the Danube and from Armenia to Southern Italy, the greatest expanse under Byzantine control since Justinian. Constantinople became "The Paris of the Middle Ages",[a] making her dominance felt in government, education, religion, philosophy, art and architecture. The treasury held reserves of the equivalent of nearly fifty million dollars in gold. Thus in 1025 Byzantium had reached the zenith of all its powers.

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[a]13, p 55.

Then came weak rulers. The aristocracy and the governmental bureaucracy, previously controlled by the strong emperors, soon quarrelled their way into anarchy. The army deteriorated. Within fifty years of the end of the "golden age" Turks camped opposite the walls of the city while within three "emperors" competed for power.

Again Byzantium was saved by a series of strong rulers of the House of the Comneni. The authority of the crown was reestablished. The army was reinvigorated and the borders, though diminished, were again secured, and Constantinople entered again on a short period of brilliance.

The Comneni were followed by the House of Angelus who were weak and inept. Anarchy again became prevalent and when the Fourth Crusade, diverted by avarice from its true goal, assaulted the walls of Constantinople in 1204 Constantinople fell to invaders for the first time since its establishment.

In 1261 the Greeks were able to retake their capital, but the reestablished Byzantium had neither the force or the leadership to ensure its survival. The Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Turks and the Crusaders all were their enemies. Inside the city walls was almost continuous civil strife, class conflicts and religious struggles that consumed the nation's strength. When the Turks once again besieged the city there were only six thousand defenders to hold the walls. They were not enough. 29 May 1453, the Turks took the city and Byzantium was done.[a]

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[a]13, p 21.

Section II. The Weaknesses That Eventuated in her Overthrow and Disintegration.

There seems to be a wide variety of evaluations concerning Byzantium. Apparently for those who have studied it objectivity has been very difficult. Opinions vary from one extreme, "nothing but a tissue of revolts, seditions, and perfidies," (Montesquieu); "A tedious and uniform tale of weakness and misery" (Gibbon); "A monotonous story of the intrigues of priests, eunuchs, and women, of poisonings, of conspiracies, of uniform ingratitude, of perpetual fratricide." (Lecky)[a] to the other that sees Byzantium as the fountainhead of strength and many virtues.[b]

There are many reasons for this. There are hostilities with deep and ancient roots, some feeding from misconceptions and prejudices as old as the Crusades. Others have come from the religious conflicts that preceded and followed the division of the Catholic church into the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Communions. On the other hand Slavic writers tend to see Byzantium as the progenitor of their cultural and religious values. Thus, it is a difficult problem to make a quick selection from the complicated tapestry of culture that was a thousand years in the weaving.

In differing degrees those characteristics that seemed to have the greatest weakening effect on this culture were greed, inflexibility, lack of discipline or the inability to recognize and comply with the requirements of responsibilities, obligations and duties, religious

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[a]13 xi.
[b]41, p 36.

weakness of a kind and a lack of marital and sex morality. By now it may begin to appear that this study was begun with a list of cardinal sins in mind and the research consisted of a hunt for evidences of this preconceived guilt. Such is not the case. The categorization has been the result of the organization of the information accumulated during the study.

It is difficult to designate when the financial requirements of government surpass the legitimate needs for its operation and move into the realm of greed. The appointments of the court were by all accounts most luxurious and expensive and to support this sybaritic splendor everything in the rigidly controlled economy was heavily taxed.[a]

Their lawlessness in connection with their greed is summarized in the following:

> "All these great men - civilians and soldiers, laymen and ecclesiastics alike - flouted the law and strove by every means in their power to enlarge their estates at the expense of the poor. 'They regard the poor as their prey; they fret when they cannot seize their goods.' They are savage in despoiling them; they swoop upon them 'like a plague'. ... such are the words of the imperial NOVELS of the tenth century".[b]

So pervasive was this element of greed that it was found even in the monasteries, those refugees from wordly things whose inhabitants were under vows of poverty. Nicephorus Phocas, "though a most pious man and the founder of religious houses," was scathing in his comments on this unspiritual phenomena.

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[a]14, p 114.
[b]13, p 154.

> "The monks possess none of the evangelical virtues; they think of nothing save the acquisition of land, the erecting of huge buildings, the purchase of vast numbers of horses, cattle, camels and every kind of livestock. All their energies are devoted to their own enrichment, so that their life in no way differs from that of people living in the world."[a]

From these evidences apparently greed was a motivating factor in the lives of most of the citizens. It is interesting to note the extent that gold and avarice entered into Byzantium's diplomacy and foreign relations.

> "It was by diplomacy that Byzantium had mainly to thank for the length of its glorious life. We must acknowledge with regret that bribery and corruption were important factors in this success. Procopus deplores, with some justice, that to the ends of the earth the barbarians were enabled to live in clover upon secret service funds from Constantinople while at home people were bled white by taxation."[b]

When this diplomacy could be backed by at least a degree of power it was generally successful. However, there were times when this policy didn't work because the individual or group concerned wouldn't stay bought.

This greed sometimes had them going in a vicious circle. Justinian, for example, decided to "economize" on somebody else by reducing the size of his army and withholding part of its pay. The soldiers, mostly mercenaries, revolted and preyed on the people they had been brought in to protect. This left the borders largely unprotected. The barbarians were not slow to take advantage of the situation by raiding across the

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[a]13, p 169.
[b]9, p 354.

border and so Justinian had to buy them off. In the end it required more to buy off the raiders than he had hoped to save.[a]

Another variation of the same theme of preferring gold to military strength occurred considerably after the time of Justinian:

> "In Asia Minor, a system of scutage was introduced, whereby the obligations on the part of the landlords to maintain levies for the service of the state was converted into money, thus weakening both their power and the Empire's borders. Finally, 1071 saw the disaster which this cleavage rendered inevitable. The Byzantine army was almost annihilated on the Armenian border; the Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes taken prisoner; and richest provinces of Asia Minor were lost forever."[b]

There is little doubt but that greed was one of the contributing factors in the slow degeneration of the force and size of the Byzantine Empire.

Inflexibility was present in the governmental structure to a considerable degree, especially after the time of Leo the Syrian. "The medieval Byzantine totalitarian state conjured up...at Constantinople... had a disasterous effect on the development of the Byzantine civilization. It was an incubus that overshadowed, crushed, and stunted the society that conjured it up."[c]

Toynbee further states that this rigid system reduced the church to total subjection to the state and brought on the Graeco-Bulgarian War, that so weakened Constantinople that it could not withstand the combined assaults of the Franks and the Turks in the eleventh century.

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[a]41, p 161.
[b]9, p 128.
[c]39, p 179.

Diener points out the tight state control of all trade and production, down to the smallest items and actions.[a] This was commercial inflexibility and rigidity, the same inflexibility is found with disasterous results in the government of the outer provinces. "It was the unyielding policy of the emperors that rendered the provinces of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt ready to secede from the Byzantine Empire and become subject of the Arabs."[b]

Their ruthless persistence in the individual pursuit of wealth and power might also be considered an evidence of a certain inflexibility of personality.

A disregard for principle coupled with a lack of sense of responsibility and obligation that might be summed up as a lack of self-discipline was also weakness that was contributory to disaster. The situation mentioned earlier, when three men struggled for primacy while the Turks prepared to assail the walls is an example of that lack. It is further underlined by the prevalence and persistence of riots of the populace that on numerous occasions had to be put down by the troops, 24,000 of whom were permanently stationed in or near the capital primarily to meet such exigencies. On one occasion during the reign of Justinian, more than 30,000 rioters were so slain. Generally these riots would begin at the Hippodrome and then engulf the whole city. We have preserved for us in the words of Paellus a contemporary account of the

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[a]14, p 114.
[b]41, p 208.

rioting of April 19, 1042. In this affair Emperor Michael V and numerous of his near kin fell victims of the murderous mob.

The following figures give impressive evidence of the effect of this lawlessness expressed in riots in the streets and intrigues in the palace:

> "Of the 107 sovereigns that occupied the throne between 395 and 1453, only 34 died in their beds, and 8 in war or by accident; the rest either abdicated - willingly or unwillingly - or died violent deaths by poison, smothering, strangulation, stabbing or mutilation. In the space of 1058 years we can count 65 revolutions, in palace, streets, or barracks. Even when the pretenders failed to achieve their goal - and failures far exceed successes - the result of these ceaseless turmoils was no less damaging to the State."[a]

The presense of a continuous struggle for power in high places without regard for moral compunctions or law is gruesomely documented for us by Diehl.[b] "Theophano...was the wife of two emperors and the mistress of a third; but whether she killed one monarch or four cannot be accurately determined."[c]

The Byzantine's lack of self-discipline was evident also in their attitude toward marriage vows and relations between the sexes. Even discounting the hostility of Procopius it is clear that Theodora had been a notorious prostitute prior to her marriage to Justinian, but this apparently was no bar to the imperial purple. In view of this it seems that Diener's appraisal of Justinian's motivations are probably accurate

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[a]13, p 128.
[b]13, p 136.
[c]14, p 232.

and that the financial considerations were much more important to him than the moral.[a]

> "Although Justinian re-enacted severe penalties for homosexual offenses, this was probably on financial grounds rather than moral ones. Forfeiture of property in such cases brought large sums into the treasury, since uranism was rife in the highest circles. Speaking generally, it was regarded and treated as a private affair. Provided that children were protected against misuse, let the handsome young person of either sex turn their charms into hard cash if they liked - such was the prevailing view. But there must be no brothels in which the inmates were treated as prisoners. Prostitution was a voluntary profession."[b]

This not only illustrates a lack of moral principle, but also the ascendance of the spirit of acquisitiveness over any principle. That the example was set in the highest circles is further made clear by Deiner:

> "It was when he had risen to high position under Michael that, as we have related, the Emperor gave him his own mistress, the lovely Ingerina, for wife. Since, however, she was to remain Michael's property, Basil received Thecla, the Emperor's own sister, as substitute. After Michael's death, (murdered by Basil) Basil unconcernedly entered into a closer relationship with the woman who up till now had been no more than his nominal wife, and Ingerina bore him a half-dozen children."[b]

Because of the particular nature of the Byzantine church and governmental structure, these men, upon becoming temporal rulers, also assumed great religious stature. "I am emperor and priest,"[c] is the way Leo III put it. There can be little wonder then that with such examples by those who lead the state and the church, the moral tone of the populace was

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[a]14, pp 105-106.
[b]14, p 227.
[c]41, p 257.

low. The disregard for the principles of responsibility and obligation has already been brought out in the discussion of greed, and rioting, the murderous struggle for power, and the disregard of temporal, moral and ecclesiastical law.

Among the historians there seems to be considerable confusion both as to the size of the armies and their composition. Byron states that the size of the army varied from 120,000 to 150,000 and that after the sixth century mercenaries were discarded until the loss of the Asiatic themes made them necessary again.[a]

On the other hand we get this information from Deiner:

> "The Army, it is true, was not very large, its strength rarely exceeding twenty thousand over and above the twenty-five thousand men of the imperial guard. But the soldiers were choice specimens, carefully equipped and admirably led... Although there was universal liability to military service, the authorities thought it inadvisable to recruit their armed forces from within the Empire."[b]

Diehl gives an explanation that seems logical and resolves the apparent contradictions in the two earlier references. He states that the army was constituted from three different sources, levies of foreigners settled within the Empire. It would be these that Byron referred to as, "from within its confines." Others, called allies, were foreign regiments, supplied by a friendly ruler and commanded by their own officers. The third element were barbarians from almost anywhere seeking employment in the imperial armies. They were called confederates.[c] It

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[a]9, p 273.
[b]14, p 343.
[c]13, p 41.

would be these to whom Deiner was alluding. But none could be considered as true Byzantians since even those from within the empire were not Greeks but generally Turks, Mardaites or Slavs. Concerning the inhabitants of Constantinople, Adams gives us the words of a contemporary evaluator, Rabbi Benjamin of Tuela, who was in the Levant in 1173. "The Greeks hire soldiers of all nations whom they call barbarians, for the purpose of carrying on...wars with...the Turks. They have no martial spirit themselves and like women are unfit for war."[a]

There were centuries when the system apparently worked very well. Especially when there were emperors who recognized the need of strong forces and consequently treated them well and paid them well. However, we have already alluded to the disaster that occurred when gold was substituted for troop levies from the themes.

Troops from the themes and the neighboring friendly rulers worked well so long as their home area was not under attack, but when their homes were threatened they had a tendency to turn their backs on Byzantian military enterprises and return enmasse to defend their homes. This was the kind of loyalty that Byzantium could neither inculcate or buy.

In the later centuries these armies of mercenaries became almost as dangerous to Byzantium as the enemies beyond her borders.

> "They lived off the country; they looted and laid waste everything in their path, and even on the day of battle were

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[a] 1, p 101.

> quick to forsake the imperial cause, if they were displeased by their leader or thought they had more to gain by fighting on the other side...They thought of nothing but their own advantage; the men were intent on plunder, while their officers sought high positions, wealth and honors,...The defense of the Empire was a minor consideration."[a]

Quite clearly the Byzantians did not possess that quality of self-discipline or sense of duty and obligation required to give themselves to self defense. Eventually their own sense of values betrayed them and they learned through disaster that they could not pay others to make the sacrifice that they themselves were not willing to assume. The economics of the situation were of secondary importance to those allies who had a regional, tribal, or national loyalty. To those mercenaries for whom the economic consideration was primary, it made no difference whether the gold came from legitimate pay or from looted Byzantian property, whichever paid best. Again the welfare of Byzantium took second place.

Religion, which should have been a force for unity, actually was at times dangerously divisive in the Byzantine Empire. Since the time of Constantine it had been officially Christian. The life time of Byzantium covers the period of most of the great heresies and schisms of the Christian church and most had their origins within the Empire.

Arianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism, Caesaropapism, Monotheletism, Iconoclasm, and Monasticism, form only a partial list of the controversies that rocked the Empire. Overshadowing them all

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[a]13, p 202.

was the contention between the Pope in Rome and the Patriarch in Constantinople. This, after centuries of strife, was resolved by two polarizations of power, one at Rome, the other at Constantinople. These conflicts were dangerous because of the coalescence that existed between church and state. The Emperor considered himself the supreme leader of the church and reserved the right to dictate discipline and dogma and to require the church's obedience to his will.[a] Theological unorthodoxy therefore automatically carried with it the implications of secular treason which the Emperors were not slow to recognize and reward with exile or worse. The system did not permit the conscientious dissenter to "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's"[b] and thereby continue as a loyal citizen of the state. Rather, in the face of the dual nature of his temporal sovereign, his obdurate conscience forced him to conclude "We ought to obey God rather than man."[c]

On the other hand, one is put hard to it to see any pervasive moral influence emanating from the church and affecting the community as a whole. In view of the standards of conduct openly followed by many of the wearers of the purple who were also heads of the church, the charges of worldliness not infrequently hurled at the monastics, the intrigues and maneuvers indulged in by the greater and lesser clergy, apparently a vast chasm yawned between ethics and religion. True, religious

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[a] 13, p 165.
[b] St. Matthew 25:21
[c] Acts 5:29

expression permeated literature, art, architecture and many other phases of the culture, but in the light of their more earthly activities a modern analyst might well conclude that here is a people that individually and collectively suffered from a schizoid condition permitting activities in two different realms without any conscious correlation between them and therefore no sense of inappropriateness.

It would seem that the religious life of these people frequently offered very serious threats to the unity of the nation and at the same time did little to mitigate the ever pervasive human tendencies toward selfishness and ego-centrism that can be so destructive to any community.

Section III. Summation on Byzantium.

In contrast with Carthage and Rome, Byzantium did not develop from a small group of homogeneous people. Its imperial status was put upon it full blown by the hand of Rome. The nation was composed of a heterogeneous people with many backgrounds and cultures. Along with the diminution of the Roman element there was a growth of orientalism infused with the Greek. The Greek element and influence was very strong at the center of power but diminished as one moved away from that center and became very thin and tenuous on the outer reaches of empire. Many of the cultural elements of the provinces were never assimilated into the total organism.

The major solidifying features were, the authoritarian imperial organization, the pursuit of profit and self-advancement that found its

best opportunities within the framework of the Empire, and the Christian Church. Conversely these were also the components that contributed probably the most to the weakness and disaster.

In all fairness one must also take cognizance of the tremendous external pressures to which the Empire was subjected. Probably the most significant of these were:

The migrations of huge segments of peoples from out of Asia,

The dynamic emergence of the Arabs, united and vitalized by Mohammedanism,

The explosion of the Crusades out of Europe,

The intense commercial competition of Italian mercantilism.

Byzantium had numerous periods of regression and difficulty but under strong leadership it always reacted strongly to the "stimulus of blows," until after the "golden age", which ended about 1025. Thereafter each decline was generally a little deeper than previously and each recovery was a little weaker so that overall progression was downward. This was reflected in the slowly diminishing extent of the Empire.

Then it was that its weaknesses began to take an increasing toll. Inflexibility of mind had become so set that new solutions to problems did not seem to be available. This is shown in the rigidity of the authoritarian government. By its complexity and adherence to old forms it was unable to adapt itself to the demands of real competition in the commercial area, or to make adjustments that would have bound the provinces more closely. Their singlemindedness in maintaining an opulent

court greatly in excess of their ability to support was of a piece with their scrimping on the army and accepting gold instead of military levies from the themes.

They were also inflexible in their greed for personal as well as governmental opulence. This insatiable thirst for wealth extended through all levels of the culture; the emperor, the merchants, the monasteries, even the sale of their bodies by the young people was apparently acceptable, if it paid well!

Lawlessness has been cited in their operations in pursuit of wealth, in the riots of the people and in the use of intrigue, and varigated homicide in the pursuit of power.

All of the above seems prima facie evidence of an over-riding lack of moral discipline. This opinion is supported by their attitude on sex matters, their unwillingness to undergo the rigors of military service and their general attitudes of egocentrism.

The Church which could well have been an agency of unity and stability, as well as the inculcator of moral values and ethical actions did not adequately meet its opportunity. Its close identification with the government made its quarrels and schisms government business and so it contributed, not unity, but divisiveness. Its quite thorough absorption of the "worldliness" of court and commerce made it impossible to do other than leave a void between the high moral principles enunciated by its founder and the code of ethics it practiced.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATION OF THE FINDINGS ON CARTHAGE, ROME AND BYZANTIUM

Section I. Common Elements of Deterioration.

To capsulate twenty three hundred years of history and draw conclusions from it is exceedingly hazardous. The organization of these conclusions must necessarily be somewhat arbitrary due to the requirement of brevity. The study discloses five major areas of weakness.

1. Greed.
2. Inflexibility.
3. Lack of, or loss of, religious stability.
4. Lack of discipline.
5. Moral corruption.

The following outline indicates graphically the evidences of those weaknesses as revealed in the practices or characteristics of the people of the three societies. Some elements appear more than once; others that do not probably should. The intent has been to locate each under the major heading that seemed most appropriate overall in view of the overt expression of that particular characteristic concerned. Carthage has only four categories. The specialized, primarily military, source material did not provide adequate information on which to base as complete an evaluation as in the case of the other two.

Section II. Elements Unique to an Individual State.

CARTHAGE

Greed

Required mercenary armies

Lead them to try to cheat the mercenaries.
Was placed ahead of statecraft.
-non-support of Hannibal.

Inflexibility
Notable in their pursuit of wealth and commercialism.
Exemplified in the governmental organization.
Demonstrated in personal vendettas, i.e. Hanno vs the Barcas.

Lack of religious stability
No exclusive loyalty to native deities.
Opportunism in addition of deities and rites to their panthenon.
Human sacrifice if seemed propitious.

Lack of discipline
Unwillingness to assume personal responsibilities in defense.
Unwillingness to undergo sacrifice or self denial voluntarily.
-non-support of Hannibal.

ROME

Greed
Placed ahead of statecraft or responsibility in ruling provinces.
Suborning of military for personal gain.
Crushing of middle class and small land owners.
Commercialization of slavery for profit.
Evident in the tax structure.

Inflexibility
Exemplified by imperial bureaucracy.
Upper classes pursuit of wealth and power.

Decay of religious standards
Political manipulation of religious system.
Syncretization of foreign deities.
Neglect of religious rites anddisappearance of active faith.

Lack of discipline
Loss of sense of civic obligation,
demonstrated in necessity for hiring mercenaries.
Lack of municipal leadership.
Lawlessness and homicide in power struggles.

Moral corruption
Disintegration of marital and sex standards.
Loss of financial morality.
Uses of slavery.

BYZANTIUM

Greed

Court oppulence ahead of statecraft.
Heavy taxes throughout the realm.
Individual unscrupulousness in pursuit of wealth.
Scimping on army to maintain court luxury.
Use of greed in diplomatic practices.
Use of mercenaries.

Inflexibility

Government an oriental despotism,
rigid economic controls,
unbending provincial policies.
Pursuit of wealth.

Religious conflicts.

Dual status of church and state weakened civic loyalties.
Church quarrels undermined validity of religious claims.
Church became permeated with "worldliness".
Developed a void between belief and ethical practices.

Lack of discipline.

Riots of the people.
Lawlessness, intrigue and homicide in power struggles involving both court and church.

Moral corruption

Moral and sex standards of expediency.
Diplomatic policy of playing on avarice and greed.

Section III. Weighing the Factors of Decline.

There is a need for a common denominator that, of itself, needs no further definition. Excessive self-centeredness or ego-centrism fits the requirement. Applied against the preceding list of factors it is found to fit consistently, whether we consider lawlessness, greed, breakdown of family, the church quarrels or any of the listed characteristics. In every case the condition developed because vast numbers insisted on my way, my profit, my gratification, my scriptural

interpretation and "the devil take the hindmost." Every social organization contains some who live by such a code, but when the number of ego-centrics begin to dominate and permeate the culture, anarchy results which no social organization can tolerate and live.

Thus a paradox: self interest is an integral part of human nature and probably essential to human survival, but conversely we have seen it as destructive and corrosive in the three societies studied.

Without sermonizing it is submitted that the answer is found in activation of the moral ethics of Christianity. Granted, there are many positions, interpretations and differences regarding those teachings. However, there are three statements concerning standards of conduct that are generally agreed on as basic. These are:

The Golden Rule: "You must practice dealing with others as you would like for them to deal with you." Matt. 7:12 (Williams Transl.)

The "Lord's Prayer" "And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors..." Matt. 6:12 (Williams Transl.)

The Great Commandments: "The second is like it, 'you must love your neighbor as you do yourself.'" Matt. 22:39 (Williams Transl.)

These directives, expressed by the Teacher of the highest ethic our world has known, frankly recognizes self-interest and self-concern, but emphatically declares that self-concern must associate itself with an equally strong concern for others. In fact these concerns are made co-equal reciprocal and interdependent.

This point could be greatly enlarged and more fully illustrated, but it seems self-evident from the three statements given above. This

kind of self-interest has a concern for well being that is socially beneficial. It does not deny that the self has needs, desires and even ambitions that may be legitimately pursued. It does deny to self the right to be exclusively self-centered without concern for how the self-interests may damage or destroy fellow personalities. It was precisely that unconcern that did the damage to Carthage, Rome and Byzantium.

CHAPTER 5

U S A

Section I. Evidences of Earlier Defined Weaknesses Among Us.

In attempting to analyze our own society one is confronted with two limitations. First is the comparative youth of our nation relative to those previously considered, and second, the matter of being immersed in the very medium one would dissect. It has been but three hundred and fifty years since the first Jamestown settlement; only one hundred and eighty-two years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which marked our beginning as a sovereign entity, and only about sixty years since the close of the Western Frontiers in the 1890s. When compared with the seven hundred year span of Carthage or the approximately one thousand years each for Rome and Byzantium, our nation is still in its beginnings. It is therefore hard to discern whether we are witnessing weaknesses of maturity or simply the growing pains of an adolescent society. One has only to review the writings of a Pliny or a Byzantine chronicler to be reminded of the difficulties of seeing objectively one's own milieu.

After perusing numerous books on the American scene, all of them making a different approach, looking for different elements and based on a different hypothesis, it was determined to use the five criteria of weakness earlier developed, with their sub-elements, as touchstones against our characteristics. This had the serious weakness of allowing no room for consideration of mitigating factors or evidences that the

characteristics were considered temporary, on the wane or increasing in power and significance. To include such counter considerations would be to produce a manuscript far beyond the limitations of this paper as is shown by the thousand pages of Max Lerner's "America as a Civilization".

GREED

Material acquisitiveness is one of the charges hurled against us most frequently by our critics. It is evident in many of our criterions of success and in the operations of our business. "I'm not in business for my health", is a businessman's frank acknowledgment of his motivation.

Greed required mercenary armies: No. Although one is inclined to question the motive when one hears the argument that we should arm other nations because for the $6500 that it costs to maintain one American soldier overseas we could maintain at least four French soldiers in France, or twenty-four Turkish soldiers in Turkey. This has the overtones of an echo from far away Carthage who also thought it cheaper to have foreigners do her fighting.

Greed placed ahead of statescraft. This one is difficult to answer with anything like definitiveness. We have been frequently accused of "dollar diplomacy". Our handling of the European War debts during the twenties, the manner of our economic penetration of South America and other economically underdeveloped areas around the turn of the century gives substance to such charges. On the other hand, our acceptance of no reparations after either World War I or II, "Lend Lease", "The

Marshall Plan", "Point IV", our treatment of the Philippines, all would seem to indicate that on the whole we can answer this in the negative. There have been swings in that direction, but the counter swings have at least been strong enough to neutralize that tendency.

Scrimping on the military for comfort, opulence, or personal gain.

If one had stopped after the first four words above, the answer would be an unequivocal yes. With the exception of the past thirteen years the United States has always been most penurious with its Armed Forces except in times of actual hostility. Even in the period since World War II that tendency has several times reasserted itself and had it not been for the almost continuous Communist threat, would probably have become dominant.

However, this military austerity is generally and quite accurately attributed to the basically non-military character of the American people and not to the desire for luxury or greed on the part of rulers or an oligarchy. Perhaps greed does enter in to the extent that the American people would rather spend their money themselves than have it taken from them in taxes to be spent for military purposes.

Greed evidenced in heavy taxes for the opulence or comfort of a ruling class or clique.

No. Our taxes are heavy but the main burden of them results from past wars and present military preparedness. The other portions of our taxes are for the benefit of a rather broad spectrum of the American

public and a certain amount to foreign aid in support of our nation's foreign policy.

Manipulation of greed motivations in foreign policy.

Yes. Not so much in the direct bribe-corruption as was so evident in the ancient civilizations, but in the sense that we would do something for another country if they would meet certain requirements of ours. The Aswan Dam, for example, was offered to the Egyptian government in the belief that it would promote a prowestern attitude on the part of that government. However, when Nasser made his arms deal with the Soviets, indicating that that American offer had not had the desired effect, the American offer was withdrawn. This is an oversimplification, of course, but is in essence the way it worked. This approach constituted the "strings" that other nations have objected to in connection with American loans and aid. This cannot be considered on par with "buying" rulers and generals as was practiced frequently by some of the ancient civilizations studied.

Individual unscrupulousness in pursuit of wealth.

Yes. The presence of this is shown by the necessity of regulatory laws such as the Sherman Anti-Trust laws, laws regulating stock-market manipulations and banking. The prevalence of crimes against property and the current Congressional investigations into labor union practices are further evidences of this propensity.

INFLEXIBILITY

No. Generally speaking this is a quality most uncharacteristic of

American society. Its "open-end" classes, its mobility with regard to changing jobs, location of domicile, the growth and adaptability of the economy are all demonstrations of a flexibility and resiliance that have become an integral part of the American society.

Inflexibility in bureaucracy of government.

No. A bureaucratic organization has a certain rigidity to it and compared with the flexibility evident on the American scene the governmental bureaucracy seems inflexible, but as compared with those of other societies it still retains a characteristic American malleability.

Inflexibility in pursuit of wealth.

In the pursuit of, yes; in the methods employed, no. As was acknowledged under greed, the pursuit of wealth is the great American vocation, and seems to be a generally accepted goal.

Inflexible economic controls.

No. Economic controls exist, as have already been alluded to. However they fall far short of complete control even in wartime. In addition to that they are amenable to adjustment by the people through appropriate channels as demonstrated in the recent lifting of controls on corn acreages.

Inflexible territorial or provincial policies.

No, as witnessed by Alaska and the Philippines.

Despotic government.

No. Despite the fears of those who are concerned with the increasing

centralization of government, it is still responsive to the will of the electorate and so does not remotely resemble a despotism.

Personal vandettas.

Yes. Apparently no one has made a study of how these have affected the course of American affairs, but they were present at the time of the founding of our republic and had a strong influence on the administrations of Jackson, Lincoln and Wilson to mention only three especially notable.

RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES

American society has a paradoxical situation in that while it is divided into many segments religiously it has a basic unity due to the fact that the preponderant majority of those who profess any religious convictions are Christian. The largest non-Christian minority is Jewish. This means that even this group has many basic beliefs and concepts in common with the larger group due to the Judaic roots of the Christian faith. The devisiveness extant between the various sects and denominations is rarely virulent, considerably less so than even fifty years ago. This is attributed variously to a growth of genuine tolerance by some and by others to a lack of real religious conviction on the part of the churches to the extent that the differences don't matter any more. In any case Americans constitute a church affiliated society. The Yearbook of American Churches states that more than 104,000,000 Americans are church affiliated.

Political manipulation.

No. That is in the sense that the government does not enter into the appointment of church officials, decisions of dogma and church government. The Constitution prevents such action.

Yes, in that the government and politicians recognize the religious factors involved in the nominations of candidates for public office, recognition of the state of Israel, representation to the Vatican, etc.

Neglect of rites and disappearance of active faith.

No to both, although there is a wide variety of opinion regarding the significance of our current active faith that ranges all the way from dubbing it a "return to religion", to a watered down "religion-in-general".

Syncretization.

No.

Church permeated with "worldliness".

Posed as a question, this would start a vigorous debate in any church council, synod or convention with numerous protagonists on both sides. Beyond question the church has adopted modern business methods and has achieved wealth and property. Whether this constitutes worldliness would depend on a definition I am not prepared to make here.

A void between belief and ethical practices.

Yes. The simultaneous growth of both church membership and crime statistics that exceed the population growth curve can lead to no other conclusion.

LACK OF DISCIPLINE

Max Lerner has summed this up well in his statement: "America today, as in the past, presents the picture both of a lawless society and an overlegislated one."

Riots of the people.

To a degree. Civil war, race riots, strike violence could be considered to correspond to the riots of ancient peoples. With the exception of the Civil War however, none of them have involved the percentage of the people that were engulfed in the ancient rioting. Further, the civil war was but one incident of four years duration as compared with a single period of fifty years of civil war in Roman history that contained several such periods.

Lawlessness.

Yes. All commentators have noted that there has been a strong element of lawlessness in American society. All indications are that it is increasing rather than decreasing.[ab]

Loss of sense of civic responsibility.

This has numerous ramifications. The prevalence of crime indicates that there has been a degree of loss. The United States has never had to resort to mercenary troops to fight for it. However, in the Civil War and World Wars I and II conscription has been necessary. The vitality of civic responsibility is well demonstrated by the activities

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[a]30, pp 658-661.
[b]31, p 277.

of service clubs, i.e. Kiwanis, Chambers of Commerce, etc. The United States has a multitude of these clubs and they render a magnificent service to the community, neither are they wanting in leadership.

Loss of willingness to undergo voluntary sacrifice and self-denial.

No. When presented with a clearcut issue and given adequate leadership American citizens have generally shown a capacity for sacrifice. There are those who would disagree but it can be substantiated by numerous examples in both the religious, civic and military areas of American life.

MORAL CORRUPTION

Decay of family life.

No. Much has been written and argued pro and con on this subject. It is apparent that we are going through a period of transition regarding family life that has numerous causes all stemming from the broader revolution that has encompassed our entire way of life. There are peripheral evidences of decay such as divorce, juvenile delinquency and an increase in illegitimate births but again this is well summed up by Lerner:[a] "With all its weaknesses and excesses the American family is a going concern reflecting less the disintegration of the culture than its mobility and genius for innovation."

Decay of sex standards.

To a degree. However, it is not clear whether this is an accelerating process indicative of a real breakdown, or is a temporary swing

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[a]30, p 559.

of the pendulum due to impact of three wars in this century, the extreme mobility our culture has developed, the influence of such entertainment media as the movies, radio and television. Again to cite an opinion of Lerner, he thinks possibly it is an interregnum period of the type Toynbee likes to use, that is a period when old values have been severely shaken and have not yet re-established themselves or been replaced by newer concepts of value. Such an evaluation seems valid, but doesn't leave us anything very definitive for the purpose of this paper.

Loss of financial morality.

At first glance this would appear to be the equivalent of the earlier subsection "Individual unscrupulousness in pursuit of wealth"; however, as stated here it posits a worsening situation. Though there is much that can be presented on both sides of the question, within the limits of this study our answer can only be there has been no greatly significant loss of financial morality. While many authors discuss it, none within the scope of our reading ventured an opinion that could be summed up in a sentence or a paragraph. And the opinions that were expressed were riddled with the escape-hatches the authors left for themselves.

Section II. Evaluation of Their Significance and Weight as Bearing Upon the Future of the United States.

In his "America As a Civilization", Max Lerner has made an exceptionally fine and penetrating analysis and interpretation of the American scene.

In the last chapter he devotes a number of paragraphs to drawing a parallel between the United States and Rome. Then he makes this comment:

> "It will be obvious that such a portrait of a civilization and an era might describe equally the Rome of the late Republic or early Empire and contemporary America. The parallel has been pushed hard by those who have sought in it variously a sermon against capitalism, the New Deal, or the public debt, religion or irreligion, materialism or supernaturalism, sexuality or divorce. Sermons aside, however, the question is whether the paralled is actually a deadly parallel or a melange of striking metaphore, dramatic coincidences, and half truths that fascinate the historical imagination while they mislead it.
>
> "The trouble with historical parallels is that they are selective and omit whole areas of unlikeness...there have been elements in American life crucially missing from the Roman..."

This is a precise summation of the thought that has been troubling this student ever since getting well into this study. It has been quite thoroughly brought out by the recognition of the widely diverse, approaches and objectives notable in all the writings concerning both the ancient civilizations and our own. Pure objectivity would seem to be a rare attribute among historical writers. Given human limitations perhaps it cannot be otherwise. Too often, however, it seems to be motivated by a certain amount of "axe-grinding", ideological, theological, nationalistic or otherwise. Thoroughly cognizant of the "areas of omitted unlikeness," and disturbed by them, also with due consideration of the basic similarities of human nature wherever found the following conclusions are offered:

On the basis of the characteristics considered, the U.S.A. is "on the side of the angels" by a factor of approximately four to one, with

several intermediate points neither angelic or demonic. Our strongest indictments lie in the individual fixation upon the material aspects of success and the too often unscrupulous means of attaining those ends. Thus far this has been kept under a fair degree of control through regulatory laws based on common concepts of morality expressing a sense of justice and respect for the individual. These in turn are largely rooted in our Judio-Christian religious heritage and the Anglo-Saxon legal concepts on which our laws are based.

We must recognize, however, that in the indictment made above, i.e. individual fixation upon material success and the willingness to be unscrupulous in its pursuit, is the manifestation of that excessive egocentrism that we found permeating the ancient societies. We dare not congratulate ourselves that its appearance among us is limited in extent. Carthage, and more especially Rome and Byzantium, demonstrate that this rot can spread as in a barrel of apples and be the ruination of the whole.

Section III. Possible Action.

Augustus, in his time, and the Volstead Act in ours, proved that morality cannot be legislated. Byzantium proved, as we may yet do, that a hiatus between moral pronouncement and ethical practice is not only hypocritical but tragically dangerous. Our people, as a nation, must come to understand that the essence of the three statements by Christ, earlier referred to, are essential requirements not only for the salvation of their individual souls but for the preservation of our society. As a

clergyman I admit to bias, but I can see no rational alternative.

The Master Teacher asked the dramatic question "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"[a] It would seem that history has a word for nations as final and as unequivocal as was His for the individual. The nation that has lost its soul to ego-centrism is well on its way to losing that portion of the world that was bought with it. Carthage indicates it. Rome and Byzantium supply the proof.

The Army has made a start in the right direction with its Character Guidance Program prescribed by AR 15-120. Too often, however, otherwise responsible officers consider this an enlisted man's program. In view of the tremendous numbers of American citizens who are alumnus of the enlisted ranks the value of the program cannot be overestimated. However, important as it is that the Officer Corps accept such a program, it is even more important that they exemplify the standards it portrays. Therefore, whether along the lines of the Character Guidance Program or some other, some means should be established whereby in the academies and in every subsequent service school an officer attends a course in ethics and morals is presented convincingly and in such a fashion that he might understand that his moral and ethical standards and practices are not simply a private matter between himself and his conscience. A third party, his nation, also has a tremendous stake involved, one that is fully as important as the performance of his military duties.

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[a]Mark 8:36

The power of example is beyond calculation and it appears that here is a responsibility that the Officer Corps cannot ignore. In this day military decisions have moral implications of an extent that no historical comparison can be made. The Early Christian Church had little reason to admire the Roman soldiery. Not only was the Roman military the instrument in the death of their Master but was also frequently the instrument of their own torture and persecution. Yet it noted the soldier's readiness to sacrifice, even his life if necessary, in the performance of his duty. It also noted the discipline and devotion with which he prepared to carry out his required duties. The early church fathers commended those military virtues to the emulation of the church. Ephesians 6:10-17, II Timothy 2:3-4, the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians 37, Ignatius' Epistle to Polycarp 6, all testify to the inspiration drawn by these early Christians from the Roman Armies Code of Honor.

Our armed forces already have a generally recognized reputation for selfless devotion to duty, the men in them follow a career that holds no promise of super-abundant material rewards. If we could achieve one more step forward as an example of moral self-discipline it could be an example of incalculable import to the nation and even to the world.

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